

Career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in a Nigerian University

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Abstract

The study examined career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in the University of Benin. Questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. The entire population was used as sample because of the size of the population and the simple percentage was used to analyse data obtained. The study revealed that the initial course of most of the students was not library and information science they all had their career prior their admission, the students could not meet up with the required WAEC and JAMB scores hence the present course of study. The study also revealed that majority of the student's performance was on average which therefore means that the choice of course had influence on the academic performance of the students. The study therefore recommends that institutions, admission officers should carefully admit students into their programme of choice.

Keywords: Career choice, influence, students, academic performance

Introduction

In higher institutions of learning, academic achievement/performance of students in a given course, determine how successful a student would be in his study (Bell, 2013, Sharma 2012, Aminu & Timothy 2014). That is to say that the performance of a student in an institution is determined by the success of a student in a particular course of study. Academic performance according to Abiola (2012) is the best indicator of potential for success in life, it reflect ones ability and the qualities it take to have an academic excellence in life. These are consistency, determination and focus. Sharma (2012) also included that grade, attendance, standard test and extra curricula works also influence how students perform academically (Aminu & Timothy 2014).

Career choice has impact on ones future. Career development according to Issa (n.d) occurs in broad sequential stages; starting from childhood till death. The earliest stage is often a non-realistic conceptualisation of one's potentials and the world. But with time, the child begins to be more realistic in appraising himself with potential jobs. This second phase normally extends from about the end of primary school to secondary school. The third stage is referred to

as realistic choice making. In the real sense, good career such as engineers, lawyers, accountant, doctors demand good academic foundation. Although there are other professional courses that are not highly respected like the previous, but they have to advance in their study and one of such courses is librarianship. According to Abayomi and Olawale (2010), library studies is a professional course which is aimed at rendering services to users by developing the society at large. The services have to be provision of information at the exact and appropriate time. Burke and Peter (1992) argued that it is clear that students come to the course with, sometimes, vague expectations, often based on elderly ideas of what the library profession involves, or with a fixed intention to follow down a specific road. Igbinosa (2007) cited in Abayomi and Olawale ,(2010), explained that students have no interest in studying librarianship as a course. “They do not realize that librarians are unsung heroes behind the successful stories of students, researchers, medical doctors, etc”. That is to say every successful professional course such as accountant, engineering, medicine etc has a librarian that must have rendered services such as provision of reliable information for the making of that profession. According to Aminu and Timothy (2014), an individual’s interest in a course of study is of paramount importance because if one is not interested in a course, it may affect his attitude which will also tell on his performance. It is only when you have made the right choice that it will influence your performance positively.

According to Popoola (2004) Career is a job, or profession for which one undergoes regulated education and training over a period of time and which one intends to follow for the whole of one’s life. It is thus a chosen pursuit, life work and success in one’s profession.” Wiljers and Mijers (1996), cited in Abayomi and Olawale (2010) define career as individuals training or education that will lead to his work throughout lifetime. In another way “Career is the sequence of occupations, jobs, and positions occupied during the course of a person’s working life.” (Super, 1974; Vroom, 1974, Achebe, 1983) as cited in (Aminu and Timothy (2014). In essence career is all about occupation, profession in which one decide to follow or pursue in his lifetime.

Choosing a career according to Issa (n d) “is a path or course of action which essentially boils down to a career decision-making process”. That is to say the choice of career is decision made by an individual. Career choice according to Aminu and Timothy (2014) help to prepare the behavior of students in choosing any course of study and also reveal what is obtainable in the course chosen. Most students fail in a course because of wrong choice of course. The life of a student could be influenced by the choice made in the course of study throughout his life. Watson, Macmahon, Foxcros . and Els (2010), Mashige and Oduntan (2011) and Olamide and Olawaiye (2013) as cited in Fatoki (2014) acknowledge that “students often experience problems when deciding on their career choices. The career choice that a student makes can impact on the student’s enjoyment of such career in the future as it will impact on students throughout their lives”. According to Issa (n d), People fail in jobs for psychological reasons, as just having the requisite skill is not a sufficient condition for success in a job. The significance of career in the

life of an individual is a lifetime issue and it is what cannot be estimated. Fatoki (2014), Shumba and Naong (2012) explained that when the right choice concerning a career or a profession is made, it will help in either being satisfied or detestable about the course in future times. Also, Navin, (2009) as cited by Koech, Bitok, Rutto, Koech, Okoth, Korir & Ngala (2016) opined that investigating about a course before choosing it for study will help to make the right choice, get satisfied and be successful in the future. This implies that if a student makes a wrong choice, it will affect his performance in school which will also affect his future life in terms of job.

In Nigeria, according to Salami, (1999) as cited by Issa and Nwalo (2008), “many youths go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling. When this occurs, these youths constitute nuisance to themselves and their employers and are unable to contribute meaningfully to the society”. Issa and Nwalo (2008) as cited by Abayomi and Olawale (2010) also supported that when a course is wrongly chosen it brings feelings of annoyance to individuals and also lead to poor result.

Bandura et al. 2001; Watson et al.(2010) in Shumba and Naong (2012) “viewed that each individual undergoing the process of making a career choice is influenced by some factors as the context in which they live, their personal aptitude and their educational attainment”. In order word, making career choice is controlled by some phenomenon such as the environment, individual’s ability and educational achievement. Borchert (2002) explained that “environment may influence the career students choose. For example, students who have lived on an island may choose a career dealing with the water; personality is a determining factor that may influence a chosen career. Brochert further added that some careers demand that you have the personality to match the qualities of the occupation. For example, sales people have to be outgoing. A student’s personality must be a self-motivated type”. Salami 2006 as cited by Shumba and Naong (2012) also found that factors such as the family of the student, school and age group affect career choice. That is to say the family you came from either rich or poor, or families that appreciate that particular career, the school you attend and the people you associate with will influence your choice of study. Tella (2007) as cited by Abayomi and Olawale (2010) also gave some factors which bring about the choice of a course as good salary, conducive working environment, security in terms of the job. Agumanu (1989) in Abayomi and Olawale (2010) conducted a study on factors that influenced the students choice of librarianship in Imo State University Library School. The study shows that 80% of the respondents were admitted into the course of study because of their inability to be admitted into other professional courses and 20% of the students chose the course because some of their family members are librarian. Issa and Nwalo (nd) in their study interviewed some library science students in Nigeria and most of their response was on their preference on other courses rather than studying library and information science. It was also found that by Issa and Nwalo that majority of the new students offering library science as a course were those that could not make it into other discipline of their

first choice because of their low grades and were refused admission, library science then stand as their place of last hope. A study carried out by Amoor and Aliyu (2014) “on an empirical analysis of factors influencing the career choice of Undergraduates in secretarial option of business education programme in Nigeria Universities”. Some of the Students who eventually choose secretarial option do so on the account of their failure to be registered in accounting option because of entrance requirement of mathematics. It has also been observed that students who could not perform very well in other faculties such as Science courses or social science courses tend to withdraw from their department into library studies and the result revealed that majority of the students perform poorly and constitute nuisance to the department and after graduation the same set of students who could not perform well constitute nuisance to their employers and the society generally. . This is in line with the study carried out by Aminu and Timothy (2014) that there has been decline in the performance of Microbiology students in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria as indicated by their low cumulative grade point average (CGPA) scores and many carryover courses. Also a high numbers of students are moving from other faculties such as medicine because they are unable to meet up with the CGPA required. These simply mean that most of the students did not choose their present course of study that is why their performance is very poor. Observation from most universities is that most students in library science came in because they fail to secure admission in their preferred course of study and as a last resort. When this occur in most cases it affect the academic performance of the students hence this study tend to find out the initial choice of course by students, the reason for choosing library and information science as a course of study, how students become aware of the course of study and performance of student in relation to the course.

Objectives of the study

The study has the following objectives

1. To ascertain initial choice of course made by the students
2. To find out Reasons for choosing library and information science as a course of study
3. To ascertain academic performance of students in relation to their present course of study

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised

1. What was the initial choice of course made by the students?
2. Why did the students choose library and information science?
3. What is the academic performance of the students in relation to their present course of study?

Research methods

The descriptive survey design was used for this research work. The population for the study was 114 comprises of the 400 level students of library and information science at University of Benin. The entire population was used as sample because of its small size. This is in line with Anikweze (1995), Alamu and Olukosi(2008) in Amoor and Aliyu (2014) who opined that if the population number is small and manageable, it becomes synonymous with the sample. Thus, neither sample size nor sampling technique was required from the population. A questionnaire with two sections was designed by the researcher to draw information from the respondents. Section A of the research question was on demographic factors of the respondents while section B was on career choice and its influence on academic performance of students.

Findings and discussion

Table 1: Initial choice of course made by the students

S/N	Initial choice of course	No	%
1.	Yes	47	41.23
2.	No	67	58.77

Table 1 shows that majority of the students with 67(58.77) disagreed that library and information science was their first choice of course while 47(41.23) agreed that library and information science was their first choice of course. This is an indication that majority of the students did not choose library and information science as their first choice of course. This is in line with the study of Aminu and Timothy (2014) that most of the students did not choose their present course of study and this can affect their performance.

Table 2: First course of choice of students

S/N	First course of choice	No	%
1	Medicine	2	1.75
2	Law	10	8.77
3	Accounting	20	17.54

4	Electrical & electronic engineering	3	2.63
5	Economics	33	28.95
6	Bio chemistry	2	1.75
7	English	2	1.75
8	Mathematics	4	3.51
9	Political science	4	3.51
10	Business Education	5	4.39
11	Business Administration	6	5.26
12	Computer Science	4	3.51
13	Sociology	3	2.63
14	Social Studies Education	3	2.63
15	Economics Education	5	4.39
16	Botany	3	2.63
17	Mass communication	5	4.39

The table above shows that most of the students with 33(28.95) chose economic as their first course, 20(17.54) chose accounting as a course of study, 10 (8.77) chose law as a course of study 5(4.39) chose business education and so on and so forth. Majority of the students chose economics as a course of study.

Table 3: why the students chose library and information science

S/N	Reasons for choice of course	No	%
1	Interest in the course	11	9.65
2	Prestige of the course	-	-
3	Influence of my parents, peer group and relatives	15	13.16
4	Influence of my secondary school teachers	5	4.39

5	The bright future prospect of the course	-	-
6	Influence of job opportunities	10	8.77
7	Failure to secure a course in other department	19	16.67
8	The subject passed in secondary school/ JAMB	44	38.60
9	Availability of bursary	-	-
10	Good working condition	5	4.39
11	Prospect of well paid job	5	4.39

Table 3 indicated that majority of the students with 44(38.60) chose library and information science because of the subject passed in secondary school/JAMB and failure to secure a course in other department, 19(16.67) chose the course because of failure to secure a course in other department, 15(13.16) chose the course because their parents, peer groups and relatives influenced them and 11 (9.65) chose the course because they had interest on it. This therefore revealed that majority of the students chose library and information science because their scores in WAEC and JAMB did not allow them to secure a course in other department. This is similar to the study of Issa and Nwalo (n d) that majority of the new students offering library science as a course were those that could not make it into other discipline of their first choice because of their low grades in JAMB and were refused admission also, Amoor and Aliyu (2014) had observed that students who eventually choose secretarial option do so on the account of their failure to be registered in accounting option because of entrance requirement of mathematics.

Table 4: Academic performance of students on the course of study

S/N	Performance	No	%
1	Very high	5	4.39
2	High	27	23.68
3	Average	63	55.26
4	Poor	19	16.67
5	Very poor	-	-

Table 4 above revealed that majority of the students with 63(55.26) are on average in terms of their performance in the course of study, 27(23.68) had a high performance in the course of study while 19(16.67) performed poorly. It could be deduced from the study that the students are on the group of average in their course of study. This is in line with Navin (2009) as cited by Koech, Bitok, Rutto, Koech, Okoth, Korir & Ngala (2016) that if a student makes a wrong choice, it will affect his performance in school which will also affect his future life in terms of job.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study examined career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in university of Benin. The study showed that majority of the students never chose the present course of study from the beginning; this was as a result of the subject passed in secondary school and JAMB which did not qualify them into their choice of course. The study also revealed that the choice of course influenced the academic performance of the students in a way that students performance was on the average. The study therefore recommended that institutions, admission officers should carefully admit students into their programme of choice.

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